



The HAPEE Community Toolkit Guide

HAPEE Ears For Early Years

Hearing Assessment Program – Early Ears

How to take action to help prevent avoidable hearing loss in young Aboriginal and Torres Islander children.

Do your kids have HAPEE ears?

“It is essential that we identify hearing loss early on, especially between ages 0-3 when a child’s listening and language skills are developing rapidly. It means that when that child starts school, their listening and communication skills are more likely to be on track, so they’ll be better equipped to participate in, succeed in and enjoy education.”

Michele Clapin, HAPEE Manager, Hearing Australia



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Who is this guide for?

This guide is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and community workers, health professionals, early childhood educators and for individual communities who want to help improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It has been developed to support the stakeholder engagement component of the campaign.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce plays an important role in communities. These people are able to encourage behaviour change that can lead to improved health and longer life for communities, families and individuals.

Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers (CEOs) will play a key role in this new phase. They work collaboratively with key stakeholders to develop hearing assessment clinics and undertake awareness raising events in the community. They also provide tools and resources to support local activities.



Background

Ear disease and hearing loss in in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience some of the highest levels of ear disease and hearing loss in the world, with rates up to 10 times greater than those for non-Indigenous Australians^{1,2}. One in three, or approximately 37,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experiences chronic ear disease.

Children are not born with ear infections but can develop them any time after birth, often with no obvious symptoms. Otitis media (middle ear infection) can often start within weeks of birth, recur through infancy and early childhood, persist into adolescence and, if left untreated, can result in hearing loss.

Hearing loss can lead to issues such as delayed speech and educational development. Early detection and treatment is key to preventing hearing loss in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids.



1. Access Economics. The cost burden of otitis media in Australia (2008). Report prepared for GlaxoSmithKline, Perth.
2. World Health Organization. (2004). Chronic suppurative otitis media: burden of illness and management options. Geneva: World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42941>

What is HAPEE?

Hearing Australia's HAPEE program is a preventive health initiative funded by the Australian Federal Government. Its primary goals are to:

- Reduce the long-term effects of ear disease through early rehabilitative hearing services and early referral for specialist treatment;
- Increase the capacity within primary health services to identify, manage and monitor ear health.

And to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids the listening and yarning skills they need for life.

HAPEE was developed with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHSs) representatives, the Department of Health, key people from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hearing health sector and Hearing Australia. The program is run on a national basis and links with, or complements, existing community programs.

HAPEE provides free diagnostic* hearing assessments and follow-up treatment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from 0-6 years of age who do not yet attend full time school.

How does HAPEE work?

HAPEE's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Engagement Officers (CEOs) work to build meaning and strong engagement at a local level by:

- ⚙ Working collaboratively with ACCHSs, primary health clinics, early education providers and other key stakeholders;
- 📍 Supporting local services to develop hearing assessment clinics in collaboration with Hearing Australia; and
- 💙 Undertaking activities to raise community awareness of the importance of ear and hearing health.

Where does HAPEE take place?

HAPEE is now available across all Australia including remote, rural, and metro communities. As an integral part of the program hearing assessment services are provided in collaboration with Hearing Australia at variety of locations such as ACCHSs, government clinics, other mainstream primary care clinics and early childhood education centres.



In 2020, HAPEE conducted 5891 diagnostic hearing assessments for more than 4,668 children in 212 communities.

* The Hearing Assessment Program is an initiative of the Commonwealth Department of Health. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-6 or not yet attending full time school are eligible to be seen. All services provided under this program are free of charge. A hearing check includes a number of age appropriate tests of hearing and middle ear function.

What does HAPEE provide?



Support local staff to provide Initial Ear Health Assessments

Hearing Australia audiologists provide support and up-skilling to primary health care professionals to enable them to undertake initial ear health checks to identify eligible children who require a diagnostic hearing assessment.



Diagnostic Hearing Assessment

Hearing Australia audiologists provide hearing assessments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-6 who have been identified to be at risk of hearing loss.



Follow-up Treatment

Hearing Australia will report back to the primary care clinic if any further referral action is recommended. Other Australian Government programs may support timely access to follow-up treatment, e.g. Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) specialists, speech therapy and surgery.



Activities to raise awareness of the importance of good hearing health in young children

The HAPEE team participate in local community events to raise awareness in the community of the need for regular hearing checks for young children, provide in-services for health or early education staff on ear health management and community talks that improve parents and carers ability to identify signs of hearing loss and to maintain good hearing health in their children.



Tip: If you would like to find out more on how you can work with HAPEE or receive training and support, you can find The HAPEE teams contact information at the end of this guide.

What is HAPEE Ears For Early Years?



Campaign Overview

In 2020, Hearing Australia ran a campaign to raise awareness of HAPEE, the importance of ear health and hearing, and to support primary prevention and early detection of hearing issues.

This year HAPEE has a new campaign that will run from January – June 2021, to build on the foundations established in 2020. This campaign will have a stronger stakeholder engagement focus and include the following elements:

- A school readiness program including public relations/media engagement coinciding with the start of the 2021 school year. To raise and reinforce awareness of the importance of good hearing health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mums and bubs and kids and of “HAPEE Ears For Early Years”.
- Community Toolkit guide and resources to help inform health and education workers, and communities so they can spread the key messages and promote HAPEE.
- Bringing on two HAPEE Spokespersons: Luke Carroll (Aboriginal Actor - Playschool) and Emma Donovan (Aboriginal Singer and songwriter) to help extend the campaign reach and promote the program across a range of channels.
- A quarterly eNewsletter, to provide information and updates from the program to keep stakeholders and family
- Storybook resource: incorporating the artwork story of Davinder and the ‘spirit of sound’ for schools, day cares, libraries, mums and bubs groups. A new suite of photography to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in the context of the HAPEE program.
- National media advertising including a mix of on and offline.

Key messages

- Serious ear and hearing troubles affect one in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids⁺.
- Kids with infected ears often don't show any signs of trouble.
- Poor hearing can make it hard for kids and bubs to listen, learn and talk to others.
- Getting kids and bubs checked early and regularly is key to preventing hearing loss
- It's never too early to get your kids and bub's hearing checked.
- The HAPEE program offers free hearing checks to kids and bubs aged 0-6 and ongoing support and advice for parents to help prevent the long-term effects of ear and hearing troubles in young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.



Tip: These are great talking points when speaking to parents and carers or others in the community. You can download the full key messages resource on page 14. Or remember to refer back to this guide.

⁺ Health, A.G.D. of (2019). Roadmap for Hearing Health - Hearing Health Sector Committee. [online] www1.health.gov.au [Accessed Sep. 2020].

Your HAPEE Community Toolkit

This resource has been provided to help you build a HAPEE community toolkit with up to date resources and information to help you carry out the key messages and purpose of the program into the community.

There are a number of ways you can use your toolkit to help to reduce both the incidence and impact of ear disease and hearing loss in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, including by:

- Increasing community awareness about the importance of ear and hearing health,
- Spreading the word about the HAPEE program, its benefits to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids and how to get help, and
- Encourage parents to take advantage of the program to ensure their child has the best chance of avoiding preventable hearing loss.

To date, 67 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services have signed up to support the delivery of the program in their communities. There are more than 80 audiologists working for the program and 10 Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers who work closely with local communities across Australia.

Together, they are working to ensure more and more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up with good hearing health.



What resources are available?

Resources for your toolkit

Hearing Australia has developed a number of resources to assist stakeholders in delivering information into the community such as:

- What is HAPEE?
- What is HAPEE Ears For Early Years?
- How hearing is tested in young children?
- Parent and Carer Information
- Referral pathways for stakeholders

These resources have been designed for printing. You can download, print them off and put them into your HAPEE Community Toolkit.

Promotional resources

For our HAPEE Ears For Early Years Campaign we have developed a number of resources that stakeholders can use to promote the program in the community and on their social networks. Including:

- Social Media Tiles
- Videos
- Posters
- Flyers

Other useful resources

HAPEE has also provided PowerPoint Presentations to use within your organizations to help others learn more about the program.



What will your toolkit look like?

Here is a snap shot of the resources available to you online to download and build into your toolkit.



How to get started and take action with your toolkit?

- ✓ **Download and print out your toolkit resources:** Print off all the resources you need have them in a folder and get to know the material. Print off extra copies of resources such as the Parent Factsheet to share with community members and clients.
- ✓ **Print off posters and flyers and share in local areas:** Print and pin these up around the workplace and at local community noticeboards. Other places could be the airport, remote technology centre, your local youth hostel, at the entrance to your community sports hall, petrol station, community store etc.
- ✓ **Start a conversation about HAPEE:** Using your toolkit and resources start having conversations with people about HAPEE. You can also email an online copy of this HAPEE Community Toolkit Guide to local community leaders, organisations and service providers.
- ✓ **Talk about HAPEE at your organisation's meetings:** Provide information, resources and key messages about HAPEE at staff meetings and/or community meetings. You can also print and distribute the other resources for people to take after the meetings.
- ✓ **Post about HAPEE on social media:** Use your social media presence to share information about HAPEE. There are some social media tiles, flyers and short videos you can share. Make sure to share these to online community noticeboards too! Find these at [Hearing.com.au/HAPEE](https://hearing.com.au/HAPEE)
- ✓ **Share your story:** Let your community know how your organisation supports HAPEE, and the benefits for children who have been through the program. You might like to create a video to share on social media. Be sure to use the hashtag **#HAPEE** so we can share across our networks.
- ✓ **Share information about HAPEE in your Newsletter:** Include information about HAPEE in local newsletters to community organisations, service providers and local leaders.
- ✓ **Know someone who has missed out?** Send them this guide and a link to the website where they can access more information, resources and sign up to the ENewsletter at hearing.com.au/HAPEE
- ✓ **Email HAPEE** to find out how your organisation can do more to help all kids have the best ear health and hearing.



TIP: if you have any questions or need any support in taking action reach out to a CEO at HAPEE@hearing.com.au and they can assist you in this process

Where to access the resources:

On the HAPEE programs "Information and Resources" web-page we have uploaded all resources and provided direct links for you to download or share.

Go to: hearing.com.au/Hearing-loss/HAPEE/information-and-resources



Is your toolkit ready?

Here's a checklist you can follow when printing off your resources to make sure you have everything that you need for your community toolkit.

- The HAPEE Community Toolkit Guide (Stakeholders)
- About HAPEE Fact-sheet
- About HAPEE Brochure
- Key Messages of HAPEE (Stakeholders)
- How is hearing tested in young children? (Stakeholders)
- How to refer children to HAPEE (Primary Health Care)
- How to refer children to HAPEE (Early childhood Education)
- HAPEE Ears For Early Years Fact-sheet (Parent/Carers)
- HAPEE Ears For Early Years DL Brochure (Parents/Carers)
- How is bubs hearing tested? Visual Journey (Parents/Carers)



Contacts



To book an appointment for a client in a Hearing Australia Centre **call 134 432**



To find out more about our service or for further assistance email the HAPEE team at HAPEE@hearing.com.au



For more information, to access the resources or to sign up to our ENewsletter visit <https://www.hearing.com.au/HAPEE>

